

## **Disability Awareness Month 2005**

### **ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS FOR CHILDREN**

The theme of Disability Awareness Month 2005 is “Mix it up.” The poster, which features four children selling lemonade at a neighborhood lemonade stand, illustrates the theme, as the children not only “mix up” their lemonade recipe but also include children both with and without disabilities in their activity. The text of the poster reads, “Friends make everything sweeter. Working together and having fun is a winning recipe for friendship – and success.” The goal of this year’s campaign is to encourage children to have positive attitudes about disability and to be inclusive in their everyday activities.

Following are discussion guides, speaker ideas and activities you can use to explain the message of Disability Awareness Month 2005 to children. The activities will help children develop positive attitudes about and behaviors toward people with disabilities. If you need additional resources, please visit [www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd) or contact the Council at (317) 232-7770 (voice) or [gpcpd@gpcpd.org](mailto:gpcpd@gpcpd.org) (e-mail).

### *Discussion Guide*

Ask the children to name activities that are performed in groups. They might mention playing hide-and-seek, a team sport or a board game, to name a few examples. Next, ask the children what one of these activities would be like if they did it alone. Would soccer be much of a challenge if you played by yourself? How could you play hide-and-seek by yourself? Emphasize that these activities are only fun when many people participate.

Next, ask the children how they would feel if they were excluded from such activities while everyone else joined in. You might ask children to raise their hands if they've ever felt "left out" of an activity or conversation. What did it feel like? How did they react? Remind the children that if we ask everyone to participate in an activity, regardless of their ability, we can help them feel welcome and appreciated.

Finally, ask children to discuss ways to make other people feel welcome in a group. How can they adapt activities to include children with disabilities? Explain that children with disabilities have the same thoughts and feelings as children without disabilities and want to participate in the same activities.

### *Speaker*

Invite a speaker to talk with the children about disabilities. Some possibilities include a teenager or adult with a disability; a person who works with people with disabilities, such as a sign language interpreter; or the parent of a child with a disability. Ask the speaker to address his or her own experiences with disability, as well as ways the children can include others with disabilities in their everyday activities.

Before the speaker arrives, give the children some background information about him or her and ask them to write down questions. (Or, work together as a class to create a list of questions.) Allow time at the end of the presentation for the children to ask these written questions, as well as any other questions they may have.

## *Activities*

1. Ask the children to list everything needed to make lemonade (lemons, sugar, water, cups, a spoon, a pitcher, ice, etc.). Write their responses on the board or a piece of poster board. Then ask them if the lemonade would be good if one ingredient was left out. Could they drink lemonade without cups? Without lemons? Explain that, just as lemonade is not lemonade without all of the ingredients, the world is not the same without every unique person. If we exclude children with disabilities from participating in our activities, we will never know how much they have to offer. Lemonade is best when all of the ingredients are included, and life's adventures are sweeter when we include everyone.
2. On index cards, write the names of four essential lemonade ingredients: lemons, sugar, ice and water. Pass out one card to each child and tell the children to get in groups so that each group has all four ingredients. If the groups work out evenly, ask the students to discuss what would happen if one ingredient had been missing. Could they still enjoy the lemonade? If some groups are missing ingredients, ask them whether their lemonade will taste as good. When they answer "no," remind them that, when we include everyone in our activities, we have more fun and create better, sweeter things.
3. Write the word "lemonade" on the board and ask the students to write down words that can be made from the letters. Examples include *deal*, *made*, *done*, *end* and *lane*. After a few minutes, award a small prize to the student who came up with the most words on his or her own. Then ask all of the children to list words they found. Write their responses on the board. Point out that, working together, they came up with a much longer list than they could make alone. When we work together and include everyone, including children with disabilities, in activities, we are more successful – and have more fun!
4. Take the group outdoors, if possible, and ask a child to hold one end of a long jump rope. Have the child try to turn the jump rope while other children try to jump. They will quickly point out that someone must also hold the other end of the jump rope. Ask a student to do so and allow the children to play for a few minutes. Then, gather them together and explain that, often, we must work together to complete projects or even play fun games. When we include everyone – with and without disabilities – we can have more fun.

5. Separate the children into groups of three. Tell children that they must create a group handshake and that each member must contribute something to the handshake. After a few minutes, ask each group to demonstrate its handshake to the class. Ask each child to say what his or her contribution to the handshake was. Explain that if any member of the group had not given his or her individual contribution, the handshake would not have been the same. By working together and including everyone, the group formed a one-of-a-kind handshake.
6. Read the children a book or short story that relates to the theme of Disability Awareness Month 2005. Check with your public or school librarian to select an appropriate book or choose one of the following: *Friends at School* by Rochelle Bunnett; *My Friend Isabelle* by Eliza Woloson; or *Someone Special, Just Like You* by Tricia Brown. After you read the story, ask the children about the characters with disabilities and their experiences. How would you feel if you were this person? How can you include everyone in activities?
7. In groups, have students make lists of things that “go together” in pairs or trios. Some examples include peanut butter and jelly, the Three Musketeers, macaroni and cheese, “Beauty and the Beast” and “Chutes and Ladders.” Ask each group to share its list with the class. Remind students that, just as peanut butter and jelly work best when together, people with and without disabilities can succeed by working together.
8. Divide children into groups of four and ask them to create an idea for a business they could run. They might mention selling lemonade, washing cars, offering lawn care services, babysitting, selling hand-made crafts, etc. Next, assign each child to a specific job: create an advertising poster or flier; make a list of supplies, ingredients and/or equipment; make a list of potential customers (parents, neighbors, etc.); and write an advertisement for the local newspaper. Have each group present its work to the class. When all the groups have presented, remind them that everyone’s contribution was needed for the businesses to be successful. When we include everyone – including people with disabilities – we have a better chance not only of succeeding but also of having fun.
9. Ask older students to prepare research reports on famous duos or trios. For example, they might choose the Wright brothers or the Three Stooges. When they have finished, ask them to briefly explain to the class how the people worked together to create or accomplish something they could not have done on their own. Remind the students that everyone, with or

without a disability, has valuable contributions to make, and when we work together, we can accomplish great things. (As an alternative, ask students to prepare research reports on famous people with disabilities.)